

Executive Board – November 2013 OMC Regional Director Statement

Statement

- Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentleman, It is a pleasure to be with you today.
- Since the last Executive Board in June, I had the opportunity to visit Jordan, Yemen and Palestine together with our Executive Director. I also had the opportunity to visit Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan in several occasions and Iraq.
- At OMC, we remain focused on the **scaling up of humanitarian response, strengthening emergency preparedness, fostering resilience and enhancing safety nets and social protection systems at the regional and national level.**

Humanitarian Response/Resilience Building (Focus on Syria, Sudan and Yemen)

- In terms of humanitarian response and support to beneficiaries, our biggest operations remain Syria and impacted countries in the sub-region, Sudan and Yemen. I wish to take a few minutes to update you on WFP humanitarian support and the efforts to embed elements for stabilization & recovery and resilience building when possible.
- As the Executive Director has mentioned earlier this week, despite increasing insecurity and access challenges, WFP continues to scale up operations in **Syria** with a plan to assist 4 million inside Syria and almost 1.8 million refugees in countries impacted in the sub-region by the end of the year. This year, WFP has already scaled up to reach 1.3 million refugees across Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, turkey and Egypt and delivered assistance to 3.4 million persons inside Syria in October.
- Last month, a Joint WFP/FAO Rapid Food and Agriculture Assessment was launched to update the understanding of the food security in Syria. The results of which will be available next month which will inform WFP as we plan for future expansions.

- **Looking ahead**, we are extremely concerned about the impact of continued insecurity in Syria which is resulting in a widening and deepening humanitarian crisis.
- We recognize that the ever increasing stream of Syrian refugees is adding tremendous pressure on countries in the region and we will continue our commitment to support countries hosting refugees in meeting their needs.
- I wish to point out that to-date, WFP has injected over US\$225 million through the C&V modality into the local economies of Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt.
- WFP's strategy for the regional Syria operations for 2014 follows a two pronged approach. Firstly, WFP will continue providing food assistance to the most affected populations. Secondly, WFP will further diversify its programmes taking advantages of opportunities to provide livelihood and enhance coping mechanisms in areas where this is possible.
- This approach is in line with the increasing global and regional concerns with building stronger linkages between the humanitarian and development approaches. Earlier this week, the Regional UNDG convened in Amman to discuss a Resilience-Based Development Response to address the Impact of the Syria Crisis.
- In **Sudan**, heightened insecurity and unrest this year has resulted in new population displacements. As a result, we are targeting around 4 million beneficiaries.
- In March 2013, WFP gained access to **Blue Nile State**, for the first time since 2011. To-date, WFP has reached a total of 84,000 beneficiaries across five assessed localities.

- In **North Kordofan**, WFP has conducted a further two distributions (July/August and September) reaching some 33,000 people who were displaced in April due to conflict.
- We continue to work in **partnership** with UN agencies on different initiatives. Last month, WFP Sudan signed a national MOU alongside UN sister agencies (UNICEF, WHO, FAO, UNFPA and IFAD) to improve coordination and implementation of activities and support the Government of Sudan in ensuring that the country accelerates the process for joining the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement.
- **Looking ahead**, WFP will continue with an EMOP in 2014. Next year, while the majority (60 percent) of the beneficiaries in Sudan will still be reliant on general food distribution, WFP will focus on building the foundations for transitioning and reducing emergency assistance through early recovery and durable solutions.
- In **Yemen**, the ED made a historic visit to Yemen in Sept, a first visit by the WFP ED since WFP established presence in the country. Her joint visit with the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Valarie Amos, really underpinned the importance of continued humanitarian assistance to Yemen at this critical time of humanitarian crisis.
- The transition to the political process, brokered by the GCC, through the National Dialogue Conference is progressing well; however challenges remain in terms of reconciliation in the north and the south.
- Based on WFP's updated Food Security Monitoring surveys in August, half of the population continues to be food insecure. Although some improvement is noted in some areas, the overall situation remains alarming and unchanged. The child malnutrition and maternal mortality rates are still among the highest in the world. WFP was able to reach most parts of the country to provide food and nutritional support up to 5 million people.

- **Partnerships:** we continue to work closely with the Government, and have developed strong partnerships with UNICEF, WB, IFAD, FAO and others, to bring greater synergy in programme activities and complement WFP efforts.
- **Looking ahead,** to continue to respond to this ongoing food insecurity and malnutrition and in support of finding a long term solutions, WFP is currently finalizing a new PRRO. The project will continue to provide lifesaving support but aims to gradually shift towards recovery and resilience.

Resilience, Climate Adaptation, and Disaster Risk Management

- If you look at the OMC operational portfolio, more than 73% of our beneficiaries are receiving support through emergency operations. But as illustrated above, several countries in the region are now in a formative phase of determining how to appropriately meet immediate needs while also supporting governments and vulnerable communities to **build resilience, adapt to climate change and contribute to longer term food security objectives.**
- To further support country offices in pursuing this ‘twin-track’-approach, the RB has made initial investments, using extra-budgetary funding, to establish the required capacity at the regional level.
- We are also collaborating with partners such as OCHA, UNICEF, FAO, ISDR, and WHO, among others. In parallel, WFP is planning to enhance collaboration with the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Conference, as well as with leading technical institutions.
- At the field level, key countries where WFP and FAO are collaborating at the strategic and programmatic level include, among others: Yemen, Palestine, Sudan, Kyrgyz Republic, Egypt and Jordan.
- For example, in **Palestine**¹, WFP and FAO co-lead a food security sector which helps align humanitarian and development programmes to Palestinian

• ¹ WFP chose to remove the PRRO due to technical reasons. Instead, WFP will be extending the existing PRRO (West Bank) and EMOP (Gaza). The Palestinian Authority is still in the process of developing its national development plan, and we have been working closely with them on the national social protection/safety nets strategy. It will be important for WFP's project to be fully aligned with the new PA strategy. In addition, WFP is launching a re-targeting exercise in the wake of the annual food insecurity findings which showed a sharp

Authority. WFP coordinates with FAO in support of the Agriculture and economic sectors . More than \$100 million has been invested through local purchase and the redemption in vouchers in the past three years alone.

- I wish to mention that during the ED visit in June, WFP signed a global MoU with UNRWA that supports Palestinians in the region particularly in light of the Syria crisis. This agreement formalizes the agencies working closer together on broad areas of cooperation including food security and nutrition, humanitarian assistance, emergency preparedness and resilience building strategies and approaches.
- In the *Kyrgyz Republic*, since 2012 under the Delivering as One mechanism; WFP, FAO and UN Women have been involved in a joint project to support vulnerable women-headed households across the country with the technical know-how and seeds to start growing vegetables for their own consumption or for sale. The activity has also involved other actors such as the World Bank, GIZ and local NGOs.

Regional focus on Emergency Preparedness

- As you can see, the MENA region remains fluid and unpredictable, making it a priority for OMC to **step up preparedness measures**. With that in mind, I would like to inform of the following:
- By October 2013, OMC has finalized the roll out of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP) in all country offices in the OMC region, including the Syria Emergency Operations (RECO, Lebanon, Turkey) and the Regional Bureau. The RB is also making it a priority to roll-out the EPRP in oversight countries, particularly in the Central Asian sub region.
- A regional IRA Preparedness project (valued at about US\$ 260,000) is currently under implementation to enhance capacities of country offices in the region in light of the increasingly volatile situation.

increase in food insecurity. This targeting exercise will help WFP and its partners focus on prioritization and ensuring that the most urgent needs are met, something that we feel strongly should be reflected in the new project document.

Strengthening safety nets and social protection systems at the regional and national level.

- In addition to the above mentioned priorities, OMC is focusing on **strengthening safety nets and social protection**. This is particularly important to this region, considering that most of the OMC countries are categorized as middle-income countries with extensive public safety net programmes which generally require reform to enhance effectiveness and efficiency.
- One example I wish to bring to your attention is our work in **Iraq**. Since March 2010, WFP has been supporting the Government in implementing a capacity building programme designed to strengthen Social Safety Nets (SSN). As of November 2013, the Government of Iraq is providing \$1.2 million to continue the programme up to May 2016. The Government of Iraq and WFP are now discussing the possibility of the introduction of electronic food vouchers in the Public Distribution System (PDS).
- In support of strengthening safety nets, we continue to emphasize the importance of creating sustainable nationally-owned School Feeding programmes. We are glad to note that the Government of Armenia has made provisions in the national budget with a vision of taking over the programme in 2016. In Iraq, Council of Ministers has just approved a continuation of the joint Ministry of Education-WFP agreement on school feeding with MOE donating another US\$17 million to WFP.

Conclusions

- Finally, I wish to mention that we are committed to improving our overall efficiency across the region as we provide more effective assistance to our beneficiaries.
- We are moving strongly on the broader framework of performance and risk management and strengthening the linkages with programme design and planning.
- Ladies and gentlemen, looking ahead, we continue to count on your support in addressing growing needs in the OMC region. The planned support (without

the response to the Syria regional crisis) for 14.5 million beneficiaries is valued at US\$ 1.5 billion^[1]. Overall operational resourcing level stands at 67 percent.

- Over the next six months, Yemen requires US\$125 million. Sudan requires firm commitments of US\$ 150 million by February 2014, considering the need to preposition food in before the start of the lean season. Other operations are also facing shortfalls, US\$ 20 million and 35 million are required for operations in Gaza and the West Bank, respectively. Other operations such as the PRRO for Kyrgyz Republic require US\$ 5.8 million, while the amount maybe small, this actually represents 87 percent of the requirements for the operation.
- For Syria, we are currently preparing our budget revisions to align our programmes with the SHARP (Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan) and the RRP (Regional Response Plan) strategic and operational frameworks. Currently, we are spending over US\$ 30 million per week for the region. This will by all estimations go up in 2014.
- Finally I wish to thank you for your support; we continue to depend on you!
- Thank you!

^[1] required for 1.2 million mts of commodities and includes C&V transfer for the value of US\$ 143 Million.